

EURO 2024

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH

William **HILL**

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the Germans
in Germany*

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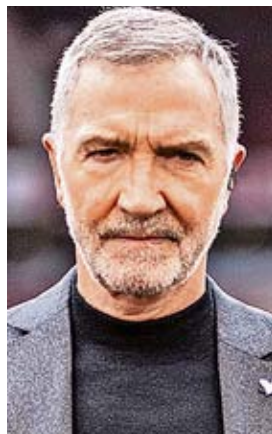
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FORWARD WORRY Souness

Souey: Last 16 has to be goal

BY GRAEME YOUNG

GRAEME SOUNESS fears Steve Clarke's troops will be outgunned at the Euros but still backs them to reach the knockout stages.

Beyond the last 16, the Scotland icon reckons England are primed to go all the way and end their 58-year wait to reign supreme at a major finals.

Souness, who racked up 54 caps, has huge concerns over Clarke's options up front in Germany after QPR striker Lyndon Dykes was ruled out.

But the former Rangers and Liverpool gaffer isn't waving the white flag as Scotland prepare to take on Germany in Munich tonight before Hungary and Switzerland.

The 71-year-old said: "There isn't a harder opening game than the hosts, Germany. This also has to be the best Hungary side I've seen.

"I expect Scotland to have a difficult time. They can't beat any team in a goal fest because they don't have a striker who can score goals at that level.

"They'll have to come up with a way to stay in games and play counter-attacking football. But it's not beyond them to finish second in their group."

Souness, though, doesn't see similar problems for Gareth Southgate's side.

Speaking on William Hill's Three Up Front podcast, he said: "The stars have aligned for England.

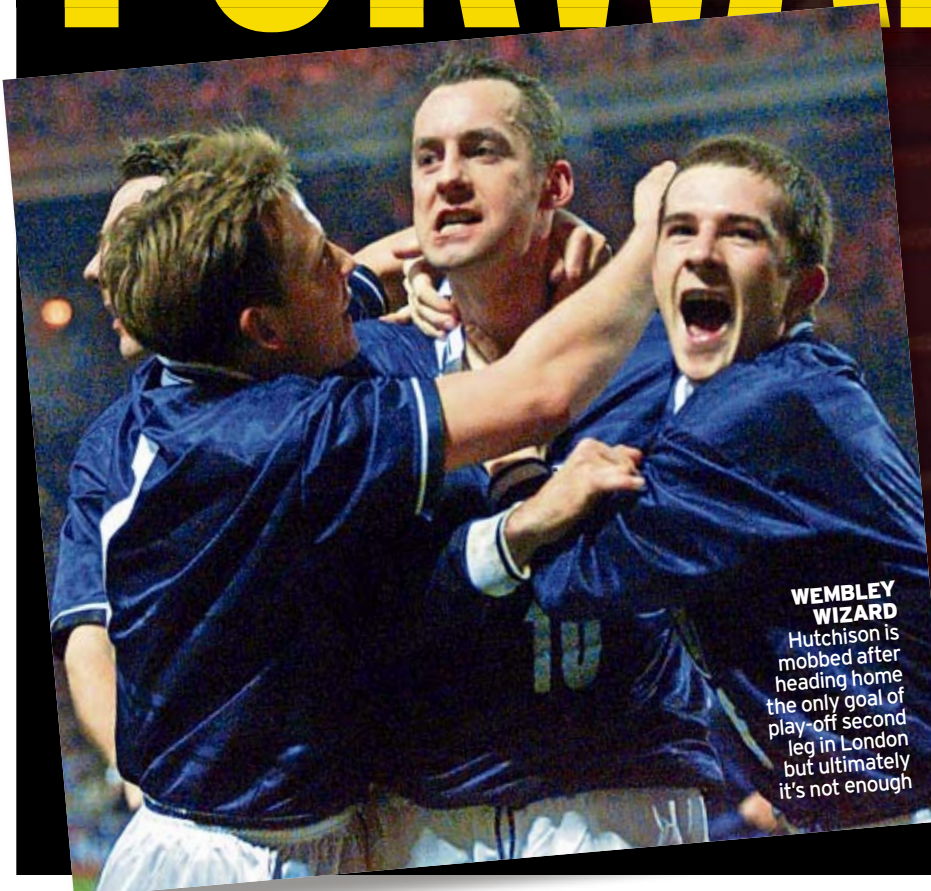
"Experience in winning tournaments doesn't matter. If you're a top player, you go into every game thinking you can win.

"These players are winning games every week at club level, they're winners. They don't put the England shirt on and feel different because they've never won a tournament in it."

As the last man to net winner versus Germans, Don credits Burns with wonder to follow

Tommy wasn't backward in me becoming FORWARD

GERMAN EFFICIENCY
Hutchison revels in friendly winner versus Germany in '99 inside the Weserstadion



WEMBLEY WIZARD
Hutchison is mobbed after heading home the only goal of play-off second leg in London but ultimately it's not enough

DON HUTCHISON will forever be remembered by the Tartan Army for his soaring leap under the Twin Towers.

But the former Scotland favourite admits he would never have had his Wembley moment without his bullet strike in Bremen... and Tommy Burns.

Hutchison made history when he nodded home the only goal against England in what was Scotland's last trip to London before the Three Lions' home was torn down and rebuilt.

But he's also in the record books for being the last Scot to score a winner against Germany courtesy of his clinical strike in a friendly almost seven months before that play-off clash with the Auld Enemy.

His Wembley header was not enough to book a slot for Craig Brown's side at Euro 2000 but it did secure him a place in the hearts of the Scotland faithful.

Hutchison, though, is the first to admit he feared his cap career – which ran to 26 senior games – had been

EXCLUSIVE
BY ANDY NEWPORT

killed off before it had even got started after a dismal night in Wrexham.

The former Liverpool, West Ham, Everton and Sunderland midfielder turned frontman may have been raised in Gateshead but was eligible to pull on a dark blue jersey thanks to his Nairn-born dad Douglas.

His first invite from the SFA came in 1994 when he was called up for a B international friendly against Wales.

Hutchison was hardly a stand-out in a 2-1 defeat but something stuck in the mind of Burns, who had been asked to take the team that night by national boss Brown.

Fast forward five years and when Brown was short of a striker ahead of the clash with Germany, it was Burns who suggested Hutchison be given the nod.

Thrown his big chance against Die Mannschaft, having only made his



WE'RE DON TO A WINNER
Burns, top right, proved crucial in Hutchison, inset, getting the nod for Bremen test as goal against Germans would follow, far right



international debut off the bench when replacing Gary McAllister against the Czechs the month before, Hutchison took it by lacing the ball past Jens Lehmann.

The rest, as they say, is history.

Looking back on his big break, Burns who was behind my call-up.

"I'd played in a B international against Wales in Wrexham.

"It was a bit of a bang average game, I didn't really stand out.

"But Tommy played me up front in the second half.

"Now I didn't really think I'd done much – I can't because I never got a call-up for another five years!

"But I saw an interview with Craig recently where he tells this lovely story about how he was looking for a striker because all the guys in the Scotland squad were injured.

"He asks Tommy if there's anyone from the B team he should put in the squad and Tommy suggested my name. But Broony goes, 'No chance

– he won't get in the team, we've got Barry Ferguson, Paul Lambert, John Collins, Gary McAllister, Stuart McCall' – all midfield heroes at that time. But Tommy goes, 'No, as a striker! He did well against Wales all those years ago, give him a try'.

"So I got a call-up for that friendly against Germany where I scored on my full debut. A few months later I then got the goal against England at Wembley, so I've got a lot to thank Tommy Burns for."

Hutchison was a late convert to playing up top but the then 27-year-old looked like he'd spent his entire life there as he fired past Lehmann.

However, his celebration routine wasn't quite as slick.

He laughed and said: "It was a decent finish for my goal but the celebration was absolutely s**t! I didn't know what to do!

"I just ended up clapping, which looked ridiculous. It looked like I was clapping my own finish!

"But it was a real big moment for

my Scotland career. I hadn't had a sniff of a call-up since that B cap I'd won against Wales in 1994.

"To go from that night in Wrexham, where I must have been crap because I never got a game for five years, to scoring against Germany was quite a big leap forward.

"And I look back on it now with extra significance because it put me in the frame for the England game a few months down the line.

"That set me up for that night at Wembley, which is probably what I'm best remembered for up in Scotland.

"That England game would never have happened without that night in Bremen."

Steve Clarke will be hoping one of his men will walk out of Munich's Allianz Arena tonight with their own moment to remember.

Hutchison said: "I'm optimistic. I wouldn't have any fear as a Scotland player. I don't think footballers go into games with that kind of mindset.

"When you go into the tunnel and

the opposition line up alongside you, you see it as a challenge.

"I've been there. I've stood there and watched Manchester United greats like Paul Scholes and Roy Keane strut up beside me.

"I played against Arsenal's Invincibles, I went up against Lothar Matthaus in that Germany game.

"And I was never, ever fearful. It just wasn't in my make-up and I don't think there will be any of that in Steve Clarke's squad.

"They're there for a reason. They are international quality footballers who have qualified by right."

"So for the likes of John McGinn or Scott McTominay going up against

someone like Toni Kroos, I'm sure they will see that as a test.

"Kroos is a quality midfielder, one of the best in the world. But it's up to our guys to find a way to disrupt him, to take away his positives and impose their own.

"Can McGinn and McTominay use their legs to drag him around the pitch into areas he doesn't want to go?

"We don't want to get involved in a stand-up match with a six-time Champions League winner because he'll be too good. But Steve will have a plan for how to deal with him.

"I expect they'll put McGinn up against Kroos and hope his energy can nullify Germany's main creator."

A few months later I scored against England so I've got a lot to thank Tommy for

DON HUTCHISON HAILS BURNS' INPUT

SCOTLAND'S BIG KICK-OFFS

1954 World Cup, Switzerland: SCOTLAND 0-1 Austria (30,000).

Erich Probst's first-half goal was the difference in Scotland's first game at a major tournament.

SCOTLAND: Martin, Cunningham, Aird, Docherty, Davidson, Cowie, McKenzie, Fernie, Mochan, Brown, Ormond.

1958 World Cup, Sweden: SCOTLAND 1-1 Yugoslavia (9,591).

Hearts ace Jimmy Murray scored his only Scotland goal in this draw.

SCOTLAND: Younger, Caldwell, Hewie, Turnbull, Evans, Cowie, Leggat, Murray, Mudie, Collins, Imlach.

1974 World Cup, West Germany: SCOTLAND 2-0 Zaire (25,800).

Goals from Peter Lorimer and Joe Jordan in Dortmund won it.

SCOTLAND: Harvey, Jardine, Holton, Blackley, McGrain, Dalglish, Hutchison, Hay, Lorimer, Jordan, Law.

1978 World Cup, Argentina: SCOTLAND 1-3 Peru (37,927).

Jordan got Ally MacLeod's side off to a flier but it turned into a catastrophe in Cordoba.

SCOTLAND: Rough, Kennedy, Buchan, Rioch, Forsyth, Burns, Masson, Hartford, Dalglish, Jordan, Johnston.

1982 World Cup, Spain: SCOTLAND 5-2 New Zealand (36,000).

John Wark's double and goals from Kenny Dalglish, John Robertson plus Steve Archibald KO'd the Kiwis.

SCOTLAND: Rough, McGrain, Hansen, Evans, Gray, Strachan, Souness, Dalglish, Robertson, Wark, Brazil.

1986 World Cup, Mexico: SCOTLAND 0-1 Denmark (18,000).

Preben Elkjaer's goal scunnered Alex Ferguson's side.

SCOTLAND: Leighton, Gough, McLeish, Miller, Malpas, Strachan, Souness, Aitken, Nicol, Nicholas, Sturrock.

1990 World Cup, Italy: SCOTLAND 0-1 Costa Rica (30,867).

Juan Arnoldo Cayasso netted the winner just after the break.

SCOTLAND: Leighton, Gough, McLeish, McPherson, Malpas, Bett, McStay, McCall, Aitken, Johnston, McNally.

1992 Euros, Sweden: SCOTLAND 0-1 Netherlands (35,720).

Scotland went down to a late finish from Dennis Bergkamp.

SCOTLAND: Goram, McKimmie, Gough, McPherson, Malpas, McCall, McAllister, McStay, McClair, Durie, McCoist.

1996 Euros, England: SCOTLAND 0-0 Netherlands (34,363).

Craig Brown's side held firm in the face of an onslaught.

SCOTLAND: Goram, McKimmie, Calderwood, Hendry, Boyd, Gallacher, McCall, McAllister, Collins, Booth, Durie.

1998 World Cup, France: SCOTLAND 1-2 Brazil (80,000).

Tom Boyd's late own goal broke Tartan Army hearts after John Collins' penalty leveller.

SCOTLAND: Leighton, Burley, Calderwood, Hendry, Boyd, Lambert, Collins, Dailly, Jackson, Gallacher, Durie.

2021 Euros, Europe-wide: SCOTLAND 0-2 Czech Rep (9,847).

Patrik Schick lobbed David Marshall from halfway for a double.

SCOTLAND: Marshall, O'Donnell, Hendry, Hanley, Cooper, Robertson, McTominay, McGinn, Armstrong, Dykes, Christie.

STEVE CLARKE may be the one who's facing the agonising decision over who gets the nod against Germany but we thought we'd give him a hand as our team of writers name their XI from heaven.

KEITH JACKSON

Gunn, Forrest, Porteous, Hendry, Tierney, Robertson, McTominay, Gilmour, McGregor, McGinn, Adams

Thank God it's down to Steve Clarke to make the final call because there will be some difficult decisions to make.

In goal, Angus Gunn retains top spot and rightly so, even if his form may have dipped for Norwich towards the end of the Championship season.

The big curveball comes at right wing-back in the shape of James Forrest.

The Celtic wideman is bang in form, has the ability to carry the ball down the flank and the energy to get back to do the dirty work. With the pace of Ryan Porteous providing defensive cover behind him, Clarke may feel he can afford to take that kind of risk.

Grant Hanley's lack of match fitness means Jack Hendry is more likely to pillar the middle of the manager's three-man central defence, with Kieran Tierney and Andy Robertson dovetailing on the left.

Billy Gilmour and Callum McGregor shore up the base of midfield, their ability to keep possession in tight areas and composure to dictate the play from deep essential.

Scott McTominay and John McGinn will play further forward and slightly wider, where they have done so much damage in the final third. The two of them have the quality to hurt the Germans.

Up front, Che Adams has the running power and the physical attributes required to keep the German defence honest for an hour or so, which is why the Southampton striker just gets the nod for a starting place ahead of Lawrence Shankland.

MICHAEL GANNON

Gunn, Ralston, Hendry, Porteous, Tierney, Robertson, McGregor, Gilmour, McTominay, McGinn, Adams

Gunn has been the main man between the sticks in recent times and should get the nod to start the big one.

Right wing-back is the big call given injuries to Aaron Hickey and Nathan Patterson. But Anthony Ralston could be a surprise hero for Scotland.

The Celtic star will not be overawed by the big occasion and knows how to put in a defensive shift.

Hanley doesn't quite look fit enough yet but Hendry and Porteous were superb in qualifying so deserve to start.

Midfield is our strongest area and we need guys in there who can work hard but also get up the pitch to support Adams.

That will be the job of McTominay and McGinn, while McGregor plus Gilmour can sit deep and dictate when they get on the ball.

It will be hard graft for Adams up top but he's used to it. He has a goal threat whenever the odd chance comes his way.

We'll need legs from the bench on opening night, with Ryan Christie, Stuart Armstrong and Kenny McLean there.

STARTERS AND MAIN COURSES

Gilmour and Christie, main left and right, will be in the mix while our team are at odds as to whether Shankland and Forrest, inset left and right, should get the nod tonight



“Thank God it is Clarke's call tonight as there will be some difficult decisions

FRASER WILSON

Gunn, McCrorie, Hendry, Porteous, Tierney, Robertson, McGregor, Christie, McTominay, McGinn, Shankland

Call me old-fashioned but this is an occasion to play our strongest system – with our strongest players in each role.

That means straight away our main weapon on the left demands Tierney play on the left of defence, dovetailing with Robertson outside him. So far, so simple.

Injuries have made right-back the big dilemma. Ross McCrorie edges it over Ralston for me due to his regular game time over the last six months.

McCrorie is solid defensively but also has that Rolls-Royce engine to get forward.

The rest of the backline picks itself but in midfield we have a plethora of options.

McGregor's drive and creativity are a must at the base and ahead of the Celtic skipper, McTominay and McGinn

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WHEN TEAMS COME TRUE

Shock & Bull story

LEWIS MORGAN can be Scotland's secret weapon in tonight's Euros opener, according to his German boss Sandro Schwarz.

The New York Red Bulls forward was a late call-up to Steve Clarke's squad after injuries to Lyndon Dykes and Ben Doak.

The former Celtic and St Mirren attacker will miss games in the MLS because of his inclusion.

But his club's manager - former Hertha Berlin gaffer Schwarz - is chuffed after he returned from injury setbacks.

He said: "It's great for him as an individual to play for his country.

"It's also great for us, for the club, because it shows how we work together. I am super happy for Lewis. I was buzzing for him.

"He deserved it. I hope he enjoys the opportunity and makes the most of it.

"My advice to him is to just to be yourself and play free. Don't stress too much, do what you do."

Gauld up for a call

VANCOUVER boss Vanni Sartini insists Ryan Gauld is good enough to play for the national team.

And he hopes Steve Clarke's comments have reignited the playmaker's bid to break into the fold.

Scotland gaffer Clarke declared the inclusion of New York Red Bulls forward Lewis Morgan should remind Gauld he's not forgotten about him.

Sartini reckons the 28-year-old has proven he is one of the best players in the MLS.

Now he hopes it is only a matter of time before the ex-Dundee United and Hibs midfielder collects his first cap.

Sartini said: "Ryan has been one of the top 10 players in this league for the last three years.

"It is the minimum that he is on the radar of the national team because he is playing at international level. The fact Clarke said he's on the radar, it can be a stimulus for him to give one, two per cent more to see if, after the Euros, he can be called up."

can press the Germans while supporting the striker.

But I would love to see Christie also thrown in beside McGregor.

The playmaker filled that deeper role for Bournemouth last season and can get forward to support while providing a bigger goal threat than Gilmour.

Up front, I still believe the strength, link up and predatory instincts of Shankland are best to start with.

ANDY NEWPORT

Gunn, Hendry, Porteous, Tierney, Ralston, Gilmour, McGregor, Robertson, McGinn, McTominay, Shankland

Scotland ended up suffering a Dutch doing when they rocked up in Amsterdam in March. And yet, for 70 minutes of that friendly clash with the Netherlands we were right in the fight. For me, the system

Clarke rolled out that night should be the template he turns to against a Germany outfit who are no great shakes.

I'd stick with the same back three who started against the Dutch and there's no doubt Gunn is our nailed-on No.1.

Injuries mean Clarke has an issue at right wing-back. I toyed with the idea of going uber attacking against the hosts and putting Forrest in there.

But with Germany's big threat coming down the left, with No.10 Florian Wirtz and left-back Maximilian Mittelstadt constantly looking to swap position in the search for space, the legs and physicality of Ralston get him the edge over his club-mate plus McCrorie.

Christie has had a terrific season with the Cherries, playing 43 games, and started against the Dutch.

But I like the look of McGregor and Gilmour together at the base of a four-

man midfield box. Christie would have a big part to play off the bench, though.

That is because, in this system, twin 10s McTominay and McGinn will be required to put in a big shift helping to drag Scotland up the pitch in the face of German pressure.

Shankland missed a big chance against the Dutch but the Hearts skipper proved that night he can link up well.

For me, his killer instinct in the box should get the 31-goal Jambos striker the edge over Adams.

SCOTT BURNS

Gunn, Hendry, Hanley, Tierney, McCrorie, Gilmour, McGregor, Robertson, McTominay, McGinn, Adams

I just think Clarke will revert to type and go for the sort of formation he has favoured, one which has brought him

most success. That means a three-man defence, which has been the basis of his teams in recent seasons.

I know the manager tinkered with a four at the end of the qualifying campaign but it saw the team lose a lot more goals.

I believe it will be back to a three, which will allow Robertson and McCrorie to get out down either side.

The midfield picks itself.

Against Germany we are going to have to retain the ball.

That is where McGregor and Gilmour come into their own.

The running power and eye for a goal from McTominay and McGinn further forward should allow them to play off Adams as the main striker.

Getting goals from the middle of the park has been the team's strength and I see that continuing.





FEARLESS Defender Ralston

Every day's a cool day for Tony

BY MICHAEL BAILLIE

GUS MacPHERSON insists Anthony Ralston will not be fazed by facing Germany.

MacPherson remembers pitching in a fearless 16-year-old Ralston for his professional debut while on loan at Queen's Park.

And he is sure the Celtic defender will take it in his stride if he gets the nod from Steve Clarke to start at right wing-back in tonight's Euro 2024 opener against the hosts.

Now St Johnstone's head of football operations, MacPherson was Spiders manager in 2015 when he contacted Hoops youth chief Chris McCart about bringing in a player on loan.

McCart recommended Ralston and MacPherson insists the full-back proved to be exceptional.

Ralston impressed for Queen's and was recalled as then Hoops manager Ronny Deila felt the teen could push for first-team opportunities.

He went on to make his Celtic debut in May 2016 against St Johnstone.

The 25-year-old has progressed to win six Premiership titles at Parkhead plus star in the Champions League.

And MacPherson said: "Nothing will faze him.

"He's laid-back but has a fantastic attitude.

"It's a huge contrast, playing in League Two and in the Euros.

"But at that time he was only 16 years old and he just went and did it, took it in his stride.

"He's had challenges along the way, competition for places, but he's stuck at it and got on with his job.

"Stevie Clarke is a better judge than me of international defenders but he'll trust him.

"He's the type of player you can put in and nothing will faze him.

"He'll give 100 per cent, no question."

GO FOR IT

AND DON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS LIKE ME

BARRY'S MESSAGE TO CLASS OF 2024



LEADING FROM THE FRONT Skipper Robbo will lead Scotland out in massive Munich opener

BARRY FERGUSON

45-TIMES CAPPED MIDFIELDER GIVES HIS VERDICT

I WAS lucky enough to live the dream as a footballer.

Growing up, I had ambitions of playing for Rangers and winning trophies with the club I supported, of testing myself against the best in Europe and down south.

I went to bed each night wondering what it would be like to captain Scotland and hear the roar of a sold-out Hampden.

And as a man, I was so fortunate to see all those fantasies come true.

But the one aspiration I failed to tick off was experiencing a major tournament.

I've got to admit, when I sit down with my tea and toast tonight to cheer on Steve Clarke's side against Germany, there will be a part of me thinking, 'I wish it was me'.

I'd have loved to have been there as skipper, standing in the tunnel ready to lead the boys out for the opening game of the Euros.

I came close to it on a couple of occasions with those heartbreaking defeats to England and the Dutch in the play-offs as well as that cruel loss to Italy in 2007.

It wasn't to be for the side I played in but I'm so glad the squad are getting their moment in the tournament spotlight.

I'm sure Steve and his men are feeling every bit as excited as the Tartan Army soldiers who have been flooding into Munich all week.

I just hope they embrace the occasion because I believe all the pressure is on Germany.

The hosts have plenty of top players but they're not the force they once were.

I really believe Scotland can get something out of this game.

So my message is go for it.

I don't want them to be left sitting here like me in 20 years' time harbouring regrets and mulling over the what-ifs.

They've qualified for the tournament on merit and fully deserve their place on the biggest stage.

Now they need to believe they can go out and become the first Scotland team to crack the group stage glass ceiling.

Most of the squad have sampled a big finals before after playing a part in the last Euros, which were held back until 2021.

But let's be honest, that was a bit of a damp squib because of the Covid crowd restrictions.

Even without a ball yet to be kicked, this year's event already feels like it will be a proper tournament with thousands, if not millions, of fans from across the continent descending on Germany.

Julian Nagelsmann's side have the benefit of home



FERGIE TIME GONE Play-off heartache against Dutch in Amsterdam, left, and battle with Italians



advantage but look at some of the results they've suffered over the last year or two.

Pumped 4-1 by Japan under former gaffer Hansi Flick last September, edged out 3-2 by Turkey in one of Nagelsmann's first games two months later... these aren't the results you'd expect of the powerhouse they used to be.

Of course, Clarke will demand his players go out with the mindset they are facing a quality side but I really believe this is a Germany team we can get at.

There are areas where we can hurt them, especially down our left-hand side if Andy Robertson and Kieran Tierney can get motoring.

And I believe we have players who now have the mentality to handle the occasion.

Robertson is a Champions League winner, Scott McTominay showed how much he enjoyed the responsibility of being this team's talisman, while John McGinn and Callum McGregor are big leaders too.

Of course we'd love to have had Lyndon Dykes, Aaron Hickey and the other lads forced out by injury available.

Even so, I still see enough quality – and certainly the right mindset – in the players who made the flight to Bavaria to be uber confident.

As a former midfielder, the battle I'm most looking forward to is the one in the middle of the pitch.

I can't wait to see how wee Billy Gilmour gets on against Toni Kroos.

I've loved seeing how the wee man has flourished this season at Brighton.

He's a joy to watch. When we played the Dutch in March, we more than matched

them for 70 minutes. Most of that was down to how Billy set our tempo and dominated the ball.

If we're going to get a result, we need more of that from Gilmour.

Of course, that will not be easy against Kroos.

What else can you say about a World Cup winner who has won six – yes six – Champions Leagues?

I was lucky enough to come up against some proper German giants.

I faced Lothar Matthaus with Rangers in a 1999 Champions League double header and went up against Michael Ballack with Scotland in Dortmund four years later.

But Kroos is another level up entirely.

The 34-year-old is a class act but how do you stop him?

Well I don't think we can afford to sit off a player of his ability, letting him have all of the space and time he likes on the ball. That's just inviting trouble.

We have to get in his face, bite at his ankles, maybe bundle him over a couple of times.

Listen, he'll have dealt with all that before and nine times out of 10 he'll handle it no bother.

But if we can have McGinn all over him like a rash and Gilmour waiting to pick up the spares, then maybe that's how we find the little chinks in the German armour that allow us to counter-attack and perhaps sneak a famous goal.

It will take bravery and a fault-free 90 minutes.

But pull it off and Scotland's dreams do not have to end at the group stage.

“They're there on merit... now they need to believe they can become first to crack group stage ceiling”



SWITCH TO KROOS CONTROL McGinn will need to be snapping at Toni's ankles all evening



EARLY BUSINESS Cortes



PROJECT PLAYER Nsiala

Let's up the ante for tests in store

IT'S been pleasing to see Rangers getting some of their transfer work done early because they don't have a second to waste.

Philippe Clement has already spoken about the challenge awaiting his team in August.

He's right to be concerned because it is a month that could make or break his side's entire season.

Gers face nine huge games as they look to get their Premiership campaign off to a flier while also qualifying for the Champions League – all while Clement attempts to bed in a raft of signings.

Jefte and Oscar Cortes are through the door and both look like decent additions.

AC Milan youngster Clinton Nsiala has agreed to join on July 1 but I'm not sure we'll see much of this project signing in the early stages.

All three new recruits are 20 years old and while it's good to see Clement bringing in young blood, I really hope he now turns his attention to adding some experience to the spine of his team.

Rangers face a huge task to overtake Celtic this season.

For that, you need guys who have been through tough moments and come out the other side.

The Old Firm can be a brutal environment.

That's why Clement now has to prioritise players who have the mindset and character to cope with the battle ahead.

It's been a decent start to the window but I expect to see things ramp up quickly in the weeks ahead.



LOCAL HERO
Müller's enthusiasm for playing for Germany has never dimmed

PROUD GERRMAN

Müller is Stevie G of Bavaria and still the beating heart of Scotland's Group A rivals

THE parallels with Steven Gerrard are striking and the acclaim for his distinguished career is reserved for those whose contribution is at elite level.

But for Thomas Müller, much like Gerrard before him, nothing is better than home. It is the beat of his heart.

With Germany not only hosting the tournament but basing themselves in Bavaria, Müller could hardly be more thrilled.

As he prepared for his fourth and presumably last Euros, Müller, 34, said: "Everyone's starting to get excited,

BY KEITH WEBSTER

not just me. The whole team is looking forward to the upcoming challenge and finally getting things started.

"People have been talking a lot about the tournament since Christmas. We're happy people are starting to come together now that it's close to starting."

Born in the town of Weilheim in Oberbayern, 30 miles from Munich, Müller is set for his 17th season with Bayern. Gerrard was born within 10 miles of Liverpool, where he played for 17 seasons.

Müller's banked 707 games for his local team, Gerrard 710 for Liverpool. Müller's donned his nation's shirt 129 times – Gerrard wore the Three Lions 114 times.

They even had one famous meeting at the 2010 World Cup in Bloemfontein where Müller scored twice in a 4-1 win that sent Stevie G and England home.

That was Müller's first year of international football. In the next few weeks he should pass Lukas Podolski into third on Germany's all-time appearances list behind Lothar Matthaus and Miroslav Klose. That's despite being denied caps in 2019 and 2020

TWO TO TANGLE Gerrard & Müller

when Joachim Low refused to select him.

As he nears the end of his career with 12 Bundesliga titles, six German Cups, two Champions Leagues and a World Cup medal, nothing's dimmed his enthusiasm for playing for his country.

He said: "It's normal to see people going about their business wearing Germany kits here. I used to be one of them!"

"I hope the fans use the Euros as an opportunity to feel as happy as possible. We want to put in performances even our biggest critics can't help but applaud."

Germany fans are used to being one of the favourites. So a 4-1 home loss against Japan and the firing of boss Hansi Flick had a nation concerned until wins over Holland and France in March.

As he looked forward to launching the tournament against Scotland, Müller said: "You can't deny we have players operating at a world-class level but we can't expect everything to land in our laps."

"It's all about going the extra mile, about helping your team-mates out. It means everyone has to know what it takes to win as a team."

We have players at a world-class level we but can't expect everything to land in our laps

THOMAS MÜLLER

Moller: We must swat the Scots

GERMAN legend Andreas Moller has demanded they get their campaign off to a flier tonight by swatting Scotland aside in Munich.

Moller was part of the last German team to win the Euros when future Scotland boss Berti Vogts guided them to a '96 triumph.

And the ex-Dortmund and Juventus star said: "It's important we send a signal to the rest of Europe by getting off to a good start against the Scots."

"I want to see this Germany team at a strong tempo against Scotland and putting them under constant pressure."

"If we are successful, it means the whole country will be full of euphoria."

"Back in 1996, Berti always used to say to us that the star is the team."

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GALLAGHER SCOT AWAY

CONOR GALLAGHER could have been lining up for Scotland in Munich in the Euro 2024 opener – but was not considered good enough.

The Chelsea midfielder, who qualified through his late grandfather, tried out for the junior set-up but didn't make the cut.

But now Gallagher is battling for a starting spot in Gareth Southgate's team for England's first Group C match against Serbia on Sunday.

He said: "When I was 15 or 16, I wasn't good enough to play for the England youth team so I went to train with one of the Scotland teams to see what I was like – and wasn't good enough for them either! "I managed to work my way back into the England youth set-up and was lucky enough to stay in it."

Gallagher's Chelsea contract only has a year to run and he has been linked with Spurs and Aston Villa. But he insists all the talk is not a distraction and added: "I'm a Chelsea player right now and just focused on England and the tournament."

HANDLE WITH CARE

NEXT STEP
Kane insists England can go all the way to Euros glory



Kane fires warning over 'dangerous' Serbia

HARRY KANE has warned England face a "very dangerous" start to their Euros campaign.

BY JOHN CROSS

They kick off against Serbia on Sunday and, although they're 33rd in FIFA's world rankings, Kane insists they can make life difficult.

Gareth Southgate's men are pre-tournament favourites but Kane warned unless they start well that tag will count for nothing.

The Three Lions captain said: "They're a team that can hurt you if you're not set up correctly and defensively they're really strong.

"They make it difficult with their moves and they have tall players so can be very dangerous.

"If we're not careful it could be a difficult game for us so we need to make sure we get that right.

"We have earned this favourites status through our tournaments so far. But we are also a team that has never won a Euros, so we're trying to make history here.

"It's a goal we want to achieve but we know it will be a long, hard road. We have to make sure we do everything right – if you're not 100 per cent in these tournaments,

you can be punished." Kane is now England's record goal scorer and they also have Jude Bellingham, Declan Rice and Phil Foden to give them a world-class squad.

Bayern Munich star Kane believes it could be the best team he has been a part of and claims even though they may lack experience some of the young players are "fearless."

Kane said: "This squad is one of the best, if not the best, we've ever had when you look at the form and the respective leagues that many of us have played in.

"We've got incredible young talent who are fearless and just want to play.

"I hope the guys can rely on me and ask me questions and if I can help them overcome something then that's great.

"But we have such a good bond, we're always talking to each other or having dinner together and there's always conversation and that helps us.

"Gareth had a difficult decision to make because we have some very good attacking players. But

for me personally it's fantastic. I want to play with players who can provide assists, who can score goals, who move well and who can get the ball in tight spaces, and we have all of that.

"Captaining England and leading the boys is probably the biggest privilege I can have as a player.

"I'll never take that for granted. This feeling is truly unique. It's an honour to do this for the fourth time.

"We've had a semi-final, a final and a quarter-final so I hope we can go all the way and win.

"We've had some really good moments, including myself, but ultimately we're here to win a Euros and hopefully can do that.

"I'm excited. You're always excited, especially when you arrive in the host country, settle into the hotel and see where everything is.

"Hopefully this will be our camp for four or five weeks.

"As the days go by you get a bit nervous, the preparation starts and when you see the first game, Germany against Scotland, that's when it really starts. But at the moment everyone is pretty calm and excited."



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Pavlovic: We'll go on the attack



ICE-COOL PLAN Pavlovic

SERBIAN defender Strahinja Pavlovic believes his team can take full advantage of England's defensive weaknesses.

Pavlovic – the Red Bull Salzburg centre-back who has been attracting admiring glances from Liverpool – has warned

Iceland gave the Serbs a perfect plan of attack for their Euro opener by humbling Gareth Southgate at Wembley.

And he said: "I would attack the English. I would go up there and try to press them. Everyone has flaws, even the English. We

saw how organised Iceland were and they were able to threaten and defeat them. We are analysing everything.

"England have one of the best teams so it will be difficult. But we have to prepare the best. Let's go for a positive result."



| GROUP A | | GERMANY | HUNGARY | SCOTLAND | SWITZERLAND |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|---------|----------|-------------|
| GERMANY | SCOTLAND | | | | |
| Allianz Arena | | Cologne Stadium | | | |
| TONIGHT, KICK-OFF 8pm (ITV) | | TOMORROW, KICK-OFF 2pm (ITV) | | | |
| GERMANY | SCOTLAND | | | | |
| HUNGARY | SWITZERLAND | | | | |
| Stuttgart Arena | | Cologne Stadium | | | |
| WEDNESDAY JUNE 19, KICK-OFF 5pm (BBC) | | WEDNESDAY JUNE 19, KICK-OFF 8pm (BBC) | | | |
| SWITZERLAND | SCOTLAND | | | | |
| GERMANY | HUNGARY | | | | |
| Frankfurt Arena | | Stuttgart Arena | | | |
| SUNDAY JUNE 23, KICK-OFF 8pm (BBC) | | SUNDAY JUNE 23, KICK-OFF 8pm (BBC) | | | |

| GROUP B | | SPAIN | ITALY | CROATIA | ALBANIA |
|---------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| SPAIN | CROATIA | | | | |
| Olympiastadion Berlin | | BVB Stadion Dortmund | | | |
| TOMORROW, KICK-OFF 5pm (ITV) | | TOMORROW, KICK-OFF 8pm (BBC) | | | |
| CROATIA | SPAIN | | | | |
| ALBANIA | ITALY | | | | |
| Volksparkstadion Hamburg | | Arena AufSchalke | | | |
| WEDNESDAY JUNE 19, KICK-OFF 2pm (ITV) | | THURSDAY JUNE 20, KICK-OFF 8pm (ITV) | | | |
| CROATIA | ALBANIA | | | | |
| ITALY | SPAIN | | | | |
| Leipzig Stadium | | Düsseldorf Arena | | | |
| MONDAY JUNE 24, KICK-OFF 8pm (BBC) | | MONDAY JUNE 24, KICK-OFF 8pm (BBC) | | | |

| GROUP C | | SLOVENIA | DENMARK | SERBIA | ENGLAND |
|--------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| SLOVENIA | DENMARK | | | | |
| Stuttgart Arena | | Arena AufSchalke | | | |
| SUNDAY JUNE 16, KICK-OFF 5pm (ITV) | | SUNDAY JUNE 16, KICK-OFF 8pm (BBC) | | | |
| SLOVENIA | DENMARK | | | | |
| SERBIA | ENGLAND | | | | |
| Munich Football Arena | | Frankfurt Arena | | | |
| THURSDAY JUNE 20, KICK-OFF 2pm (ITV) | | THURSDAY JUNE 20, KICK-OFF 5pm (BBC) | | | |
| ENGLAND | DENMARK | | | | |
| SLOVENIA | SERBIA | | | | |
| Cologne Stadium | | Allianz Arena | | | |
| TUESDAY JUNE 25, KICK-OFF 8pm (ITV) | | TUESDAY JUNE 25, KICK-OFF 8pm (ITV) | | | |

| GROUP D | | POLAND | AUSTRIA | HOLLAND | FRANCE |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| POLAND | AUSTRIA | | | | |
| Volksparkstadion Hamburg | | Düsseldorf Arena | | | |
| SUNDAY JUNE 16, KICK-OFF 2pm (BBC) | | MONDAY JUNE 17, KICK-OFF 8pm (ITV) | | | |
| POLAND | AUSTRIA | | | | |
| HOLLAND | FRANCE | | | | |
| Olympiastadion Berlin | | Leipzig Stadium | | | |
| FRIDAY JUNE 21, KICK-OFF 5pm (ITV) | | FRIDAY JUNE 21, KICK-OFF 8pm (BBC) | | | |
| HOLLAND | AUSTRIA | | | | |
| FRANCE | POLAND | | | | |
| Olympiastadion Berlin | | BVB Stadion Dortmund | | | |
| TUESDAY JUNE 25, KICK-OFF 5pm (BBC) | | TUESDAY JUNE 25, KICK-OFF 5pm (BBC) | | | |

| GROUP E | | BELGIUM | ROMANIA | SLOVAKIA | UKRAINE |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------|
| ROMANIA | UKRAINE | | | | |
| Allianz Arena | | Frankfurt Arena | | | |
| MONDAY JUNE 17, KICK-OFF 2pm (BBC) | | MONDAY JUNE 17, KICK-OFF 5pm (ITV) | | | |
| SLOVAKIA | UKRAINE | | | | |
| BELGIUM | ROMANIA | | | | |
| Düsseldorf Arena | | Cologne Stadium | | | |
| FRIDAY JUNE 21, KICK-OFF 2pm (BBC) | | SATURDAY JUNE 22, KICK-OFF 8pm (ITV) | | | |
| SLOVAKIA | ROMANIA | | | | |
| UKRAINE | BELGIUM | | | | |
| Frankfurt Arena | | Stuttgart Arena | | | |
| WEDNESDAY JUNE 26, KICK-OFF 5pm (BBC) | | WEDNESDAY JUNE 26, KICK-OFF 5pm (BBC) | | | |

| GROUP F | | TURKEY | PORTUGAL | GEORGIA | CZECH REP |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|----------|---------|-----------|
| TURKEY | GEORGIA | | | | |
| BVB Stadion Dortmund | | Leipzig Stadium | | | |
| TUESDAY JUNE 18, KICK-OFF 5pm (BBC) | | TUESDAY JUNE 18, KICK-OFF 8pm (BBC) | | | |
| GEORGIA | CZECH REP | | | | |
| TURKEY | PORTUGAL | | | | |
| Volksparkstadion Hamburg | | BVB Stadion Dortmund | | | |
| SATURDAY JUNE 22, KICK-OFF 2pm (BBC) | | SATURDAY JUNE 22, KICK-OFF 5pm (ITV) | | | |
| CZECH REP | TURKEY | | | | |
| GEORGIA | PORTUGAL | | | | |
| Volksparkstadion Hamburg | | Arena AufSchalke | | | |
| WEDNESDAY JUNE 26, KICK-OFF 8pm (ITV) | | WEDNESDAY JUNE 26, KICK-OFF 8pm (ITV) | | | |

| GROUP A | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|--|--|--|
| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts | | | |
| Germany | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Scotland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Hungary | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Switzerland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |

| GROUP B | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|--|--|--|
| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts | | | |
| Spain | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Croatia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Italy | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Albania | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |

| GROUP C | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|--|--|--|
| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts | | | |
| Slovenia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Serbia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Denmark | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| England | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |

| GROUP D | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|--|--|--|
| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts | | | |
| Poland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Holland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Austria | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| France | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |

| GROUP E | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|--|--|--|
| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts | | | |
| Belgium | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Slovakia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Romania | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Ukraine | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |

| GROUP F | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|--|--|--|
| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts | | | |
| Turkey | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Georgia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Portugal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Czech rep | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |

ROUND OF 16

| | | | |
|--|----|---|----------|
| GAME 37 | 1A | V | 2C |
| BVB Stadion Dortmund SATURDAY JUNE 29, KICK-OFF 8pm (Dortmund) | | | |
| GAME 39 | 1B | V | 3A/D/E/F |
| Cologne Stadium SUNDAY JUNE 30, KICK-OFF 8pm (Cologne) | | | |
| GAME 41 | 1F | V | 3A/B/C |
| Frankfurt Arena MONDAY JULY 1, KICK-OFF 8pm (Frankfurt) | | | |
| GAME 43 | 1E | V | 3A/B/C/D |
| Allianz Arena TUESDAY JULY 2, KICK-OFF 5pm (Munich) | | | |

| | | | |
|---|----|---|--------|
| GAME 38 | 2A | V | 2B |
| Olympiastadion Berlin SATURDAY JUNE 29, KICK-OFF 5pm (Berlin) | | | |
| GAME 40 | 1C | V | 3D/E/F |
| Arena AufSchalke SUNDAY JUNE 30, KICK-OFF 5pm (Gelsenkirchen) | | | |
| GAME 42 | 2D | V | 2E |
| Düsseldorf Arena MONDAY JULY 1, KICK-OFF 5pm (Dusseldorf) | | | |
| GAME 44 | 1D | V | 2F |
| Leipzig Stadium TUESDAY JULY 2, KICK-OFF 8pm (Leipzig) | | | |

QUARTER-FINALS

| | | | |
|--|-----|---|-----|
| GAME 45 | W39 | V | W37 |
| Stuttgart Arena FRIDAY JULY 5, KICK-OFF 5pm (Stuttgart) | | | |
| GAME 47 | W43 | V | W44 |
| Olympiastadion Berlin SATURDAY JULY 6, KICK-OFF 8pm (Berlin) | | | |

| | | | |
|--|-----|---|-----|
| GAME 46 | W41 | V | W42 |
| Volksparkstadion Hamburg FRIDAY JULY 5, KICK-OFF 8pm (Hamburg) | | | |
| GAME 48 | W40 | V | W38 |
| Düsseldorf Arena SATURDAY JULY 6, KICK-OFF 5pm (Düsseldorf) | | | |

SEMI-FINALS

| | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| GAME 49 | W45 | V | W46 |
| Allianz Arena TUESDAY JULY 9, KICK-OFF 8pm (Munich) | | | |
| GAME 50 | W47 | V | W48 |
| BVB Stadion Dortmund WEDNESDAY JULY 10, KICK-OFF 8pm (Dortmund) | | | |
| FINAL | | | |
| GAME 51 | WINNER 49 | V | WINNER 50 |
| Olympiastadion Berlin SUNDAY JULY 14, KICK-OFF 8pm (Berlin) | | | |



COLOGNE Cologne StadiumCapacity: **43,000**

Both Scotland and England play one of their group games in Cologne, which will also host one of the round-of-16 matches. Previously known as the Müngersdorfer and home to Cologne since 1923, it was redeveloped to host group games at the 2006 World Cup.

Matches: Group stage, Hungary v Switzerland (Tomorrow, 2pm), Scotland v Switzerland (June 19, 8pm), Belgium v Romania (June 22, 8pm), England v Slovenia (June 25, 8pm). Last 16, 1B v 3A/D/E/F (June 30, 8pm).

**DORTMUND** BVB Stadium DortmundCapacity: **62,000**

This is Germany's largest football stadium. It has a capacity of more than 81,000, which has been reduced for the Euros due to international regulations. The ground's famous 'Yellow Wall', the continent's biggest all-standing terrace, will be all-seating during the tournament.

Matches: Group stage, Italy v Albania (Tomorrow, 8pm), Turkey v Georgia (June 18, 5pm), Turkey v Portugal (June 22, 5pm), France v Poland (June 25, 5pm). Last 16, 1A v 2C (June 29, 8pm), semi-final (July 10, 8pm).

DUSSELDORF Dusseldorf ArenaCapacity: **47,000**

Home to Fortuna Dusseldorf, the arena has a retractable roof and construction was completed in 2004 when it replaced the Rheinstadion. It was not a chosen venue for the 2006 World Cup but has since hosted international matches. Three group games, a last-16 tie and a quarter-final will be held there.

Matches: Group stage, Austria v France (June 17, 8pm), Slovakia v Ukraine (June 21, 2pm), Albania v Spain (June 24, 8pm), last 16, 2D v 2E (July 1, 5pm), Quarter-final (July 6, 5pm).

**FRANKFURT** Frankfurt ArenaCapacity: **47,000**

Built in 1925, the Frankfurt Arena also has a retractable roof following several upgrades. England play Denmark here. It hosted matches at Euro '88 and the 2006 World Cup, and staged two NFL games last year when Kansas City beat Miami and Indianapolis defeated New England.

Matches: Group stage, Belgium v Slovakia (June 17, 5pm), Denmark v England (June 20, 5pm), Switzerland v Germany (June 23, 8pm), Slovakia v Romania (June 26, 5pm). Last 16, 1F v 3A/B/C (July 1, 8pm).

SEAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS

The 10 spectacular space-age venues where Euros will be won and lost

**BERLIN** Olympic StadiumCapacity: **71,000**

Germany's capital will host the final on July 14, one of the quarter-finals and three group games. Home to Hertha Berlin, it is the tournament's biggest venue and staged the 2006 World Cup final and the 2015 Champions League final.

Matches: Group stage, Spain v Croatia (Tomorrow, 5pm), Poland v Austria (June 21, 5pm), Netherlands v Austria (June 25, 5pm). Last 16, 2A v 2B (June 29, 5pm), Quarter-final (July 6, 8pm), Final (July 14, 8pm).

**GELSENKIRCHEN** Arena AufSchalkeCapacity: **50,000**

Another Euro venue with a retractable roof, this one also has a slide-out pitch. Constructed in 2004 to replace Schalke's outdated Parkstadion, it will host England's opening group game. England fans will find it familiar - it was here that Wayne Rooney was sent off against Portugal at the 2006 World Cup.

Matches: Group stage, Serbia v England (Sunday, 8pm), Spain v Italy (June 20, 8pm), Georgia v Portugal (June 26, 8pm). Last 16, 1Cv 3D/E/F (June 30, 5pm).

HAMBURG VolksparkstadionCapacity: **49,000**

Germany's second largest city will stage four group games and a quarter-final. Hosted the 2010 Europa League final when Fulham lost 2-1 to Atletico Madrid and a 2006 World Cup quarter-final. It was built in 1953 - Hamburg moved into the stadium in 1963 - and has had several upgrades.

Matches: Group stage, Poland v Netherlands (Sunday, 2pm), Croatia v Albania (June 19, 2pm), Georgia v Czech Republic (June 22, 2pm), Czech Republic v Turkey (June 26, 8pm). Quarter-final (July 5, 8pm).

**LEIPZIG** Leipzig StadiumCapacity: **40,000**

The largest football stadium in eastern Germany was rebuilt in 2004 and renovated in 2015. It was a 2006 World Cup venue and has been home to Bundesliga side Leipzig since the 2009-10 season. Three group games, including the Netherlands versus France, and a round-of-16 tie will be staged there.

Matches: Group stage, Portugal v Czech Republic (June 18, 8pm), Netherlands v France (June 21, 8pm), Croatia v Italy (June 24, 8pm). Last 16, 1D v 2F (July 2, 8pm).

MUNICH Allianz ArenaCapacity: **66,000**

Bayern Munich's home stadium will host one of the semis as well as a last-16 match and four group games, including Scotland's opener against the hosts. Chelsea beat Bayern on penalties to win the 2012 Champions League final at the venue, which also hosted Italy's 2-1 Euro 2020 quarter-final victory against Belgium.

Matches: Group stage, Germany v Scotland (tonight, 8pm), Romania v Ukraine (June 17, 2pm), Slovenia v Serbia (June 20, 2pm), Denmark v Serbia (June 25, 8pm). Last 16, 1E v 3A/B/C/D (July 7, 5pm), Semi-final (July 9, 8pm).

**STUTTGART** Stuttgart ArenaCapacity: **51,000**

Has a long tradition of staging major sporting events, dating back to the 1959 European Cup final. It was a venue for the 1974 and 2006 World Cups and also hosted the 1993 World Athletics Championships before being redeveloped into a football-specific stadium in 2009. Scotland will play Hungary here.

Matches: Group stage, Slovenia v Denmark (Sunday, 5pm), Germany v Hungary (June 19, 5pm), Scotland v Hungary (June 23, 8pm), Ukraine v Belgium (June 26, 5pm). Quarter-final (July 5, 5pm).

SCOTLAND'S first overseas international football tournament since 1998 kicks off tonight in the city famous for Oktoberfest but that will be nothing compared to the party the Tartan Army are planning.

And unbelievably, I find myself right at the centre of it.

Having previously lived in Glasgow for nearly 20 years and married to a Fifer, it was inevitable that once Steve Clarke's team qualified for Euro 2024, we would be here.

Our journey started at 9am on Wednesday when we left Liverpool in our accommodation and transport for the next two weeks – a mobile home packed with essentials.

There's also some food and water, of course.

Before us lay the prospect of a mammoth journey by road and train to our destination, Munich.

It has taken Scotland 26 years to get here, so what's another 24 hours?

Being exiled in the north of England, aside from trips to Hampden during qualifying, we've missed much of the excitement during the build-up.

But it wasn't long before we started to catch up as we met fellow Scots at service stations and on the Channel Tunnel train.

Dare we dream? Yes. First, though, we needed to actually get to Munich.

A quick bite to eat near Calais and we were on the road again.

Was it a lucky omen the French service station we pulled into to park up for the night was blasting out Simple Minds' "Alive and Kicking" at 1am?

A few hours' sleep on a bed that was so much more comfy than it looked and it was back on the road.

The weather was definitely making us feel at home – showers, windy, cool. So far, so very Scottish.

The place names flying past us beside the motorway started to change from French to German as we crossed the border.

The excitement was building. It was beginning to feel very real.

We passed Baden-Baden. The area isn't just famous for hosting a gang

On the road to glory with brave hearts, Simple Minds, and a fridge FULL of beer

Forget Oktoberfest, this is a real party

MEL HARVEY'S

CAMPERFAN DIARY

of Wags and their antics in 2006, it also produces some very nice wine.

It would have been rude not to stop and pick up some to try, surely?

A few bottles packed into the van and we were off again.

As we got closer to Munich we spotted another motor home, like ours festooned with a slightly soggy Saltire after a downpour.

Hands lifted to wave, knowing nods, dreams shared.

The traffic was building and it was a crawl into the city. That didn't matter, though. We'd made it.

Then we spotted it, the Olympic Stadium, our camp here.

The car park was already filling up with fellow Scots, flags marking a

little bit of Scotland in Munich. Then, disaster. The van's battery was flat, drained by the packed beer fridge.

Faced with the prospect of warm beer, Neil managed to persuade a local to come and help us fix it.

On the other side of the stadium, the fanzone was preparing to open later in the evening to host the pre-party to the big opening day.

The calm before the storm, staff putting the finishing touches to tables and bars.

It's based in natural amphitheatre in Olympic Park and seeing the adjacent water of Olympiasee lake, I couldn't help but wonder if a few of my fellow fans might be tempted for a dip later. It wouldn't be the first

time. Elsewhere in Munich, bars and cafes were filling up.

Our friends from Paisley, Glasgow and Lanarkshire were dotted across the city already with stories to tell.

An unexpected stop-off at a karaoke bar in Cologne on Wednesday, a lost suitcase, a delayed flight. But what's a bit of drama compared to what might be to come?

Our evening was planned, catching up with fellow members of the Merseyside Tartan Army, some music courtesy of Glasvegas and Kyle Falconer, who were putting on a special concert for fans.

And possibly a few beers... we are in Germany after all.

Then for the main event.

Whatever happens on the pitch, rest assured we and our fellow devoted fans will make sure Germany remembers Scotland for a long time.

SETTING STANDARD
Mel decorated van to fit in at Olympic Park, next to fanzone and lake, right



HERR TO STAY Tartan Army takes over Munich

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COFFEE BREAK CORNER

NINER

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

6982169 gives an insect

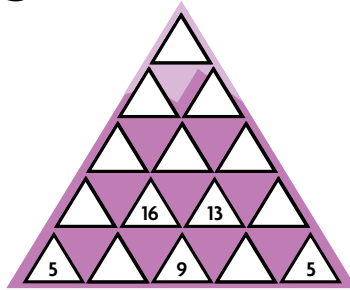
24759 gives a rodent

345572 gives a marsupial

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

SUMMIT UP

If the number in each triangle is the sum of the two below, what is the top number?



ANSWERS

NINER IMPOSTURE SUMMIT UP 108 WORDSQUARE DISCREET EVENS 6789, 2596, 3978, 1324
WORD LADDER One possible solution is: SHAM, SWAM, SWAP, SOAP, SOAK, SOCK, MOCK.

WORDSQUARE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| R | E | I |
| S | C | I |
| D | T | D |

Using the central letter and at least three others, how many words can you find? Plurals, proper nouns and hyphenated words are not allowed, and there is at least one nine-letter word.

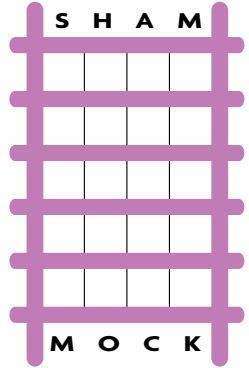
Target:
12 – good;
16 – very good;
20 or more – excellent

EVENS

Insert any digit from 1 to 9 in the squares so that the numbers in each row and column add up to the given totals. No digits may be repeated within a row or column. Only even numbers may be placed in grey squares.

WORD LADDER

Change one letter at a time (but not the position of any letter) to make a new word – and move from the word at the top of the box to the word at the bottom using the exact number of rungs.



| | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | | | 30 |
| | | | | 22 |
| | | | | 27 |
| | | | | 10 |
| 12 | 24 | 26 | 27 | |

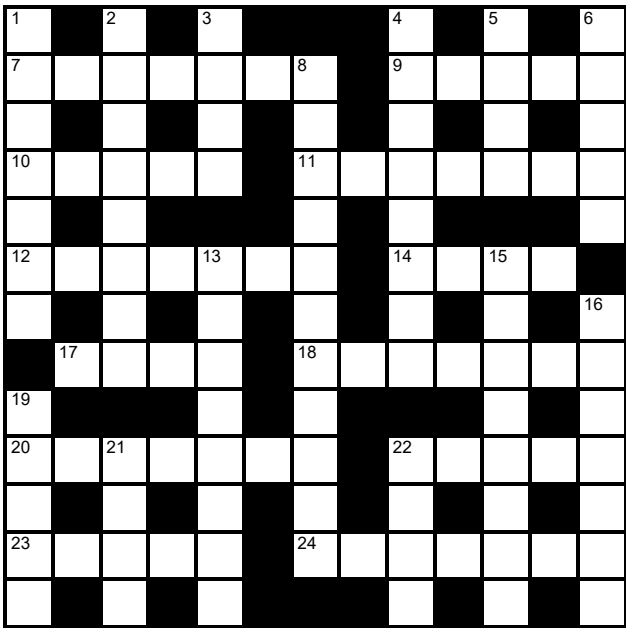
WEE THINKER

Across

- 7 I would so lie about hero-worship (7)
9 Steal and cook (5)
10 Loves to change answer (5)
11 Flowers for Judy (7)
12 Maybe I'm in vat A or C? (7)
14 Sail staggeringly into the wind! (4)
17 Then started with birds (4)
18 Ocean bird heading for Welsh city (7)
20 Feature no vocal composition (7)
22 Brittle snack (5)
23 Resort on the right is better (5)
24 Apprehensive over sun moving (7)

Down

- 1 Not a successive communication! (7)
2 The Russian style is a dangerous game (8)
3 I have to follow daughter to seedy club (4)



- 4 New to Peter, a light musical drama (8)
5 Stammered thanks at parting (2-2)
6 How dull they sound! (5)
8 Race to get food and cutlery (3-3-5)
13 Great deal on land makes a killing (8)
15 For a con to break out of jail is a hard thing (4,4)
16 Angelic musician (7)
19 Incident in prevention (5)
21 Plucky, having fortune (4)
22 Worry about race (4)

SUDOKU

EASY

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 5 | | | 7 | | 8 | | |
| | 1 | | | 8 | 4 | | 9 | 2 |
| | | 9 | 6 | | | | 4 | |
| 5 | | 4 | | 6 | | 1 | 2 | |
| | 8 | | 1 | | 5 | | 3 | 4 |
| | 9 | 6 | | 3 | | | | 8 |
| | 6 | | | | 9 | 4 | | |
| 7 | | 1 | 3 | 4 | | | 5 | |
| | | 5 | | | 6 | | 8 | |

MEDIUM

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 5 | | 9 | | 4 | | 8 | |
| 3 | 2 | | | 1 | | | | 6 |
| | | 9 | | 5 | | | | 2 |
| | | 1 | 5 | | | | 3 | |
| | 4 | | 6 | 7 | 3 | | | 1 |
| | 3 | | | | | 4 | | |
| 7 | | | | 8 | | 6 | | |
| 4 | | | | | 5 | | 1 | 8 |
| | 6 | | 2 | | | | 7 | 4 |

ANSWERS

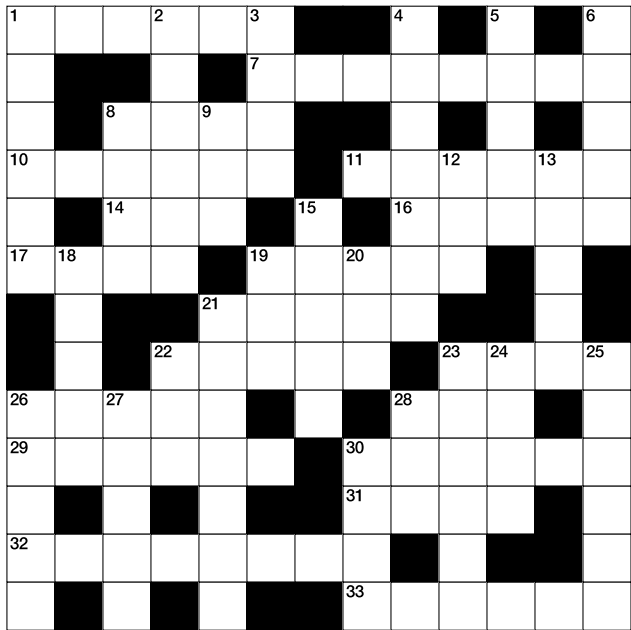
| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 1 |
| 7 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 2 |
| 6 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 5 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 2 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 9 |
| 1 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 |

EASY

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 5 |
| 8 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| 6 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| 5 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 6 |
| 6 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| 2 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | |
| 9 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 1 |

MEDIUM

QUICKIE



Across

1. Amongst (6)
7. Australian city (8)
8. Tented area (4)
10. Wears away (6)
11. Change direction suddenly (6)
14. Lair (3)
16. Weak and delicate (5)
17. Baby carriage (4)
19. Smooth cotton thread (5)
21. Cabbage type (5)
22. Mature (5)
23. Vestibule (4)
26. Lowest point (5)
28. Number (3)
29. Suitable for crops (6)
30. Wealthy, informally (6)
31. Askew (4)

32. One-sided (8)
33. Osculates (6)

Down

1. Slumbering (6)
2. Royal crown (6)
3. Faucets (4)
4. Bluebottle (7)
5. Star sign (5)
6. Gem (5)
8. Musical term (4)
9. Blokes (3)
12. Before (3)
13. All-night watch (5)
15. Plunges headfirst into water (5)
18. Aircraft detection system (5)
19. Circuit (3)
20. Male offspring (3)
21. Prime cut of beef (7)
22. Tease (3)
23. Card suit (6)
24. Murray, tennis star (4)
25. Women's public lavatory (6)
26. Diaper (5)
27. Firm supplying milk (5)
28. Pull with a rope (3)
30. Long and limp (4)

CARTOONS

THE PERISHERS



SHUGGIE AND DUGGIE



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

WEE THINKER ACROSS: 1 Rebus, 4 Umpires, 8 Domains, 9 Elgar, 10 Eva, 11 Defendant, 13 Hotter, 14 Inform, 17 Backstage, 19 End, 21 Tiger, 23 Golfers, 24 Trainee, 25 Dates.

DOWN: 1 Ridge, 2 Bombastic, 3 Spindle, 4 Unsafe, 5 Preen, 6 Rig, 7 Stratum, 12 Atonement, 13 Habitat, 15 Needled, 16 Wangle, 18 Siren, 20 Doses, 22 Goa.

QUICKIE ACROSS: 1 First; 6 Score; 9 Partial; 10 Egg on; 11 Maybe; 12 Snoop; 13 Failing; 15 Leg; 17 Errs; 18 Safari; 19 Deter; 20 Roster; 22 Veal; 24 Soh; 25 Towards; 26 Fever; 27 Alter; 28 Signs; 29 Evolves; 30 Aside; 31 Welsh.

DOWN: 2 Ingmar; 3 Spoils; 4 Tan; 5 Sting; 6 Samovar; 7 Clap; 8 Rubber; 12 Sneer; 13 Fears; 14 Irish; 15 Lager; 16 Girls; 18 Senior; 19 Deserve; 21 Oodles; 22 Valise; 23 Adonis; 25 Tells; 26 Feed; 28 Sew.